

AB 1291 (Pavley)

Children's Health Environment Right To Know Act

THIS BILL

AB 1291 would direct the California Environmental Protection Agency and the Health and Human Services Agency to establish a state-certified logo that could be affixed to products that are proven to be free of, or contain acceptable levels of, toxic substances that could harm a child's health.

This legislation would propose that the state allow a manufacturer to voluntarily place this logo on a product or packaging if the manufacturer demonstrates to the state that the product meets toxin-safe criteria.

Such a labeling program would increase consumer's awareness and knowledge of the presence of toxic ingredients and materials in products, thereby allowing consumers to make more informed choices regarding products that they choose to purchase.

PROBLEM

According to governmental estimates, industry uses more than 6 billion pounds of toxic chemicals each year. These chemicals are used in agriculture, industry and in thousands of consumer products like toys, cleaning supplies, insulation, upholstery, fabric treatments, computers and televisions, paints and cosmetics.

Unfortunately, many of these products, which are marketed for use in households and by children, contain toxic chemicals that are known to be hazardous to human health, particularly to children.

Children are especially vulnerable to exposure to chemicals for biological and behavioral reasons. Biologically, because children are still developing, their respiratory, nervous, reproductive and immune systems are more vulnerable to environmental conditions. Children breathe more rapidly and take in more air and food in proportion to their body weight than adults do. Children's skin, lungs and intestines absorb both more nutrients and more toxins than those of adults, and metabolize, detoxify and excrete those toxins at a slower rate.

Behaviorally, children spend more time on the floor and ground than adults do and they are known for their hand to mouth ways. As a result, they come in frequent contact with toxicants in dust, soil and carpets as well as to pesticide vapors concentrated at ground level. Children also come into greater contact with pesticide residues because they eat more fruits and vegetables than adults, both in general and in proportion to their body weight.

These childlike behaviors and developing biology render all children especially vulnerable to chemicals that we know are dangerous. The continued use of toxic chemicals in products is harming children as a result.

The incidence of some childhood cancers has increased by almost 30%, and cancer is now the second leading cause of death in children. Asthma has increased by 40% since 1980 and has become the leading cause of hospital admissions for urban children. Testicular cancer among teens is up by 60 %.

These trends are linked to environmental factors. One hundred percent of lead poisoning

has been attributed to environmental toxins, as has 30% of childhood asthma, 5% of childhood cancers and 10% for neurobehavioral disorders such as dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, autism and mental retardation.

SOLUTION

By providing a state-certified, toxin-safe logo for products, AB 1291 would give consumers, particularly parents, the ability to choose products which are free of toxins that are known to cause harm to children.

SUPPORT/OPPOSITION

Children's Health Environment Coalition (CHEC)--
Sponsor

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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